DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 349 HE 034 630

AUTHOR Brocato, Phil
TITLE Academic Workshops: A Plan To Help Students Experiencing Academic Probation and Disqualification.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 5p.; Contains very light print.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Failure; *Academic Probation; College Students; Higher Education; Program Effectiveness; Workshops

ABSTRACT

This mini-study evaluated efforts by the School of Health and Human Services Advisement Center at California State University, Los Angeles to reach and support students on probation or were disqualified. Workshops were held to educate students on campus policies and procedures, time and stress management skills, and factors that either contribute to or impede academic progress. A survey of participants (83 percent of those contacted) clearly demonstrated the desire of such students to receive help and the benefits of the workshops. (EV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 461 349

Academic Workshops: A Plan to Help Students Experiencing Academic Probation Disqualification

by Phil Brocato

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Brocato

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE034630

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE

Academic Workshops: A Plan to Help Students Experiencing Academic Probation and Disqualification

Phil Brocato, Ed.D.student, University of Southern California.

niversity advisement centers across this country are expected not only to give proper advisement, but also be empathetic to students who are either on probation or disqualified. In an effort to retain students in academic difficulty, the School of Health and Human Services Advisement Center at CSULA developed a grant-funded position for one graduate student to help probation and disqualified students. It was my responsibility, as a Masters of Sociology student at CSULA, to create a plan that would assist this special population, and at the same time retain students for the university. Most advisement appointments last 30 minutes, which is clearly not enough time to give proper advisement and address issues associated with academic difficulty. Students who are on probation or have been disqualified display characteristics like anxiety, self-doubt and a tendency to reevaluate behaviors. The chaos that emerges from these characteristics during a 30-minute advisement appointment is a teachable moment for the holistic advisor. The holistic advisor sees each student as a unique person with his/her own perspectives; thus, each advisement session is treated as such (Stowe, 1996).

The advisement process is essential for students to succeed whether they are on probation or disqualified. However, for the student in academic difficulty it is equally important that, from a holistic perspective, teachable moments take place away from the 30-minute advisement session. The knowledge and wisdom I attained from previous students in academic trouble can have significant impact on probation and disqualified students during a teachable moment, which traverses the academic advisement process. This special population of students must come to recognize and understand campus policies and procedures, time and stress management skills and factors that either contribute to academic progress or cause a lack of academic progress. What follows is a one-quarter study developed in the name of retention. Data from a pair of workshops given in the Spring '98 quarter was evaluated and interpreted in the subsequent quarter. Ideally, it was my goal to have the majority of students in academic difficulty increase their GPA and maintain a 2.00 or better. The reality is that I could not come to the rescue of every student, but, relatively speaking, the results for one quarter provide evidence and create a need for universities and colleges to pay attention to this special population if they are to retain these students.

Methods

In conjunction with the School of Health and Human Services Advisement Center at California State University, Los Angeles, I placed holds on student records, developed a contact letter and constructed a survey. List and mailing labels of probation and disqualified students are generated each quarter and sent to the individual schools on campus. After receiving a list of 147 probation and disqualified students, holds were placed on these students by a student worker and myself. Next, we mailed contact letters to these students informing them that the only way to remove their hold was by attending a pair of workshops. Then, it was the student's responsibility to contact the HHS Advisement Center to be placed on an attendance roster. Because the first in a pair of workshops was in the fourth week, which is prior to the next quarter's registration, holds were removed in good faith. However, if students did not attend the second workshop facilitated in seventh week,

ED341630

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the hold was again placed on the student's records. The interim period between workshops allowed me to construct and get approval for a survey that was administered at the end of the workshop requirement. The survey consisted of five attitudinal questions, three yes and no questions, one category question and one question where students answered in text. Ideas for instructional materials were taken from Gardner/Jewler's, Your College Experience, 3rd Edition. Probation and disqualification policy and procedures are set by the university and were explained in the workshops.

Results

Descriptive analysis and correlation of coefficients were used to determine frequencies in nine of the ten questions asked. Questions one and two revealed that 94.2% of probation and disqualified students could identify factors that either cause a lack of academic progress or factors that contribute to academic progress. In addition, 94.2% of the respondents in question four showed that students had a better understanding of stress management. Question three responses were clumped together in two descriptive categories: helpful and very helpful. Over 90% of students felt that the workshops were helpful and improved their ability to balance time. Like question three, the following question results were descriptive and showed:

- That 94.1% of students felt that the explanation of GPA and Grade Point Balance Deficiency (GPBD) was helpful and very helpful.
- That 94.2% of students felt that the explanation of resource centers was helpful and very helpful.
- That 93.2% of students felt that workshop exercises were helpful and very helpful.
- That 98% of students felt that the workshop leader was helpful or very helpful.

Question seven was separated into categories: Health and Human Service Advisement Center, University Writing Center, Tutorial Center, Student Support Program, Counseling Office, and Multiple Centers. Student responses and frequencies as to the importance of these categories are as follows:

HHS Advisement Center	19.4%
University Writing Center	16.5%
Tutorial Center	16.5%
Student Support Program	2.9%
Counseling Office	3.9%
Multiple Centers	40.8%

Additionally, a correlation of coefficients test was utilized as support in showing the significance of responses of probation and disqualified students. Questions 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 resulted in levels of significance less than .05, which is statistically significant. Question ten consisted of text only and was summarized with a concluding statement that suggested need. The responses occurring most often were the need for workshops on a continual basis, and the concern for students to be more involved during the workshop process.

Performance Summary after Workshops or Appointments

In table one, 83% of students responded to the letter either by attending a pair of workshops or an individual appointment at the School of Health and Human Services Advisement Center. Of 147 contact letters mailed, only 17 students did not contact the office regarding their probation or disqualification status. Students who made individual appointments, in place of attending the workshops, spoke to me by appointment only. Materials and exercises facilitated during the workshops were briefly discussed to satisfy the workshop requirement. Grade Point Balance Deficiency (GPBD) defined by California State University, Los Angeles is

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the number of negative points a student acquires from grades received below a C or 2.00.

Table:	Workshop Attendees	Individual Appointments	Total	Percent
Decreased GPBD	43	8	51	42%
Maintained same number of GPBD	30	4	34	28%
Increased GPBD	30	7	37	30%
Total	**103**	**19**	**122**	**100%**

Discussion

In short, teachable moments for probation and disqualified students are best taught and comprehended away from the academic advisement session. This mini study unequivocally establishes a need and warrants further research in order to initiate or improve existing policy that deals with students in academic difficulty. The strong results may not be effective enough to influence institutional policy, but clearly, they demonstrate those students on probation or disqualified need and want help. The data gathered is only representative of the institution where it was collected, but the basis for the idea that educators should share their concerns for all students does not begin or end with probation and disqualified students from that particular institution. Educators from other institutions of higher education must pay attention to data collected at public and private campuses to reduce academic difficulty and increase retention. My two-quarter study spanned enough time to accomplish the task at hand; however, if universities and colleges are to help probation and disqualified students succeed, there must be more money redirected for retention purposes.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE